

Plot of the in the time of the butterflies novel

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The book *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez is about the four Mirabal sisters and their struggle for a new revolution against the harsh dictatorship of Trujillo. Trujillo was a ruthless ruler who did anything he could to stay in power. He oppressed the people under his rule and was the embodiment of evil and greed. Trujillo thought lives were nothing more than robots that when malfunctioning or disagreeing with his values, could be replaced with somebody new and as easily expandable. He used fear to persuade people to do what he wanted until the sisters came along. Trujillo sees the sisters as a threat to his rule and he had three of them assassinated.

The three sisters (Patria, Minerva, and Maria Teresa) were found lifeless in a ditch due to a supposed car accident. Trujillo had made their deaths look like an accident but everyone in the country knew what had actually happened to the sisters. Dede Mirabal was the only sister who lived past this ordeal. Being a survivor, she is the most courageous and enduring character in the book. She deals with issues of morality inside herself and how her choices would affect her loved ones. She was faced with external obstacles that forced her down at every turn. The more she wanted to fight, the worse things got in her personal life. Freeing the country outweighed whatever she would have to do. Dede had courage but it was not something that she started out with. She never thought she would be able to summon up the courage to join the movement: " I'll just have to admit to myself I would be brave if someone were by me every day of my life to remind me to be brave. I don't come by it naturally" (186). Dede did not always agree with the way her sisters wanted to achieve freedom. She wanted to find a way to free the

people without resorting to violence. This made the revolution more complicated and created more obstacles for the sisters to overcome: “ One struggle at a time, sister” (186).

Dede was only able to be strong because of her beliefs. She wanted to end the dictatorship of Trujillo and she finally understood that the only way to create change is to use force. She loved her country so much that she could not bear to see the people around her imprisoned. She would have to do everything in her power to reach her goal, even if it meant throwing away her ideas of peace for the time being. She would be responsible for any and all actions related to the movement. She was able to suppress her inner doubts in order to achieve a greater good. There was more than her own personal ideals stopping her. Dede would have to make choices that would change her life. Dede had to be strong when deciding between the one she loved or joining the revolution with her sisters. She wanted to be able to join the revolution while still having the love and support of her husband: “ She had hoped to give love, and to receive it, in full measure, both directions” (176). Her husband would not let her endanger the family by joining what he thought was a foolish movement . Their house could be ransacked and destroyed or even worse, they could be killed. Her husband said that he would leave her if she ever decided to join. She could not abandon her country even if it meant giving up her future.

Dede could no longer stand for her husband’s controlling nature: “ I feel like I’m buried alive. I need to get out. I cannot go on with this travesty” (180). She realized that the whole time she was married to him, she was never able

to make her own decisions. She was afraid of Jaimito, her husband, and what would happen to her if she ever went against him. He was always the one to determine what she could or could not do. Dede did not agree with Jaimito's Ideas : " Some people can't ever really see eye to eye" (189). She knew that this was her decision to make. She gathered up enough courage and put the country ahead of her family. She had to join the revolution and whatever happened after, she would have to live with. When she joined, it was already too late to stop the inevitable. Dede has to live the rest of her life not knowing why she was the one chosen to live. She regrets not joining the movement before it was too late: " By the time it is over, it will be the past, and she doesn't want to be the only one left to tell the story" (7). Dede distanced herself away from the revolution to keep her family safe. Even though she let her sisters continue with the movement, she was always worried for their safety. She was not there when her sisters died and this would be hard for her to overcome. She felt sadness and despair due to the death of her sisters, but she would also feel regret. She would have to bear the grief of not being able to do anything to save them. Dede's life would always be intertwined with her sisters: " Whether she joined their underground or not, her fate was bound up with the fates of her sisters. She would suffer whatever they suffered. If they died, she would not want to go on living without them" (193).

Dede was able to keep on living even though this thought would always be in her mind. She was able to overcome the mental damage that had brought her down. She had to keep on living for them. The reason the sisters' started the movement after all was for the people. Dede could not stand to abandon

the gift of freedom her sisters have given her. Dede was able to overcome physical and mental obstacles to achieve the goal of the movement. She was courageous because she devoted her life for what she believed and in doing so she was able to conquer so much. With her help, the movement raised awareness about Trujillo's dictatorship and it meant the end of his tyranny. She had to live through all of this. She had to endure the sorrow of the death of her sisters and the overwhelming feeling of regret: " Perhaps this is the only way to grieve the big things in snippets, pinches, little sips of sadness" (5).

Dede was able to live through all of these tragic events. She would have to live the rest of her life with an empty heart that would always be longing for something more. Her feelings of regret would not be something that she could easily accept. She not only lived past the whole experience, but would also be able to bear all the responsibilities that came after. Time would be the only thing that could stitch the opening in her heart. In times of sorrow and misery, her spirit never dimmed. She was able to free the country from imprisonment at the cost of her own happiness. Dede is courageous because she set aside her own personal desires for what she believed was truly right